



Rights and Responsibilities

The Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Every person has a fundamental right to life and a responsibility to speak out when systems and situations do not uphold the fullness of our inherent human dignity.

“Individual rights, when detached from a framework of duties which grants them their full meaning, can run wild, leading to an escalation of demands which is effectively unlimited and indiscriminate.”

Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 43

Sacred Scripture

“Open your mouth in behalf of the mute,
and for the rights of the destitute;
Open your mouth, judge justly,
defend the needy and the poor!”

Proverbs 31:8-9

Sacred Tradition

“These differences belong to God’s plan, who wills that each receive what he needs from others, and that those endowed with particular ‘talents’ share the benefits with those who need them.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1937

Catholic Social Teaching in Action



Lift up your voice by exercising your right to participate in our society and use that voice responsibly by advocating for policies that protect human dignity. Learn more about how you can form your conscience to help you advocate for human dignity at faithfulcitizenship.org.

Prayer for Basic Rights

Lord of Wisdom, awaken us
to our duty to care for the basic needs of all people.
Strengthen with hope
people denied their human rights and freedoms.
Provide us all with the voice to cry out
for justice for the poor and the oppressed.
Amen.